

# *Mere Men*



by Les and Tracy King

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**1Cr 3:1-3 NIV** - *Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly--mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready.*

*You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?*

Paul is starting this message off with a negative connotation to the believers in Corinth, and if he could observe believers today he would most likely start off his message the same way. The source of the jealousy and quarreling turned out to be that the believers in Corinth were following a preacher or pastor to the point of causing division ... sound familiar? The Apostle Paul said it this way:

**1Cr 3:4 NIV** - *For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere men?*

These passages in 1 Corinthians are still common issues today, except we say "I am a Baptist", "I am a Catholic" or some other denomination. There is nothing wrong when we attend a certain kind of church or identify with a particular preacher, but when we create animosity and division in the Body of Christ; we are acting worldly and immaturely. In many cases this is not done intentionally, but the seeds of division are sown when we think our doctrine is correct and another group is wrong.

## Merely Servants

The Apostle Paul makes it clear that jealousy and quarreling among believers is worldly, especially when the cause of jealousy and quarreling is because of following a particular man. By following a mere man, it makes mere men and women out of us. The focus should not be on a man's teachings about the Christian faith; our focus should be on the author of our faith ...Jesus.



**1Cr 3:5 NIV** - *What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe--as the Lord has assigned to each his task.*

**1Cr 3:7 NIV** - *So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.*

Sometimes we can be more committed to people in the faith, than the author of our faith. Jesus does not want His body divided. Our Lord appreciates that we are different, but not that we are divided. ... and most certainly not because of a fellow servants work in the Kingdom.

## ***Mostly Man***



Unfortunately, we not only claim to follow the different teachings of man, but we have created doctrinal and denominational walls. There were unique differences among Paul, Apollos, and Peter, but these differences are opportunities for growth and to understand the diversity of grace given to men. This is not just a theological topic, but an emotional and relational topic.

Mutual respect is a crucial component when building value in a relationship and we need to turn personal value into godly love for our Christian brothers and sisters, regardless of our theological and doctrinal beliefs. The fact of the matter is that our personal or denominational beliefs may not be any more correct than another person's.

**1Cr 3:21-23 NIV** - *So then, no more boasting about men! All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future--all are yours, and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.*

The Apostle Paul makes it clear that all things are ours in Christ and there is no value in following men. Notice the examples listed in the above verses; Paul uses three of the most well-known preachers to the Corinthians. Paul also makes it a point to mention that boasting should stop, such behavior is worldly and immature, and will ultimately stir up jealousy and cause quarreling between believers.

Some of the most common words that come out of a Christians mouths when they meet other believers is about whom we follow or what kind of church we attend. So we see our first interactions being about how we are divided, instead of how we are united in Christ. This shoe may fit your proverbial foot if you feel that your group or denomination is so correct in its doctrine that you have lost respect for groups that do not think exactly the same way you do.

Therefore, as the greatest teacher who ever lived said, “Love one another, as I have loved you...” (John 13:34). His example is what we should follow, and not mere men.

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